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AUTHOR Taylor, Philip; Miller Stanley
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ABSTRACT

Previous studies by the Primary Schools Research and Development Group at the University of Birmingham (England) raised questions about the nature of the professionalism to which primary school teachers lay claim. This study, intended to explore professionalism among teachers of young children, looked "back" over aspects of the history of primary school teaching, looked "in" at the views of professionalism held by a sample of today's primary school teachers across England, and looked "forward" to the issues that teachers may need to confront if the term "professional" is to become the mainspring for future developments in primary school teaching. Sources included historical materials, a questionnaire, and in-depth interviews. Eighty percent of the teachers sampled want a teaching council along the lines of the British Medical Association which would approve standards of entry into the profession. Over 90 percent believe that professional competence consists of maintaining order and keeping discipline in classroom, being responsible for standards, understanding children and motivating them to learn, and enhancing their social awareness and skills. Over 80 percent believe that changes in personal relationships between people, in the ways in which people earn their living and the way wealth is distributed in society, and in the ways in which children are brought up will making teaching more problematic. (WJC)

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